

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

**MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Survey No. **CE-1500**

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic **Principio Iron Works - Lower Barn Site**

and/or common **Principio Furnace**

2. Location

street & number **Maryland Route 7 and Principio Creek Bridge** ☐ not for publication

city, town **Principio Furnace** ☒ vicinity of congressional district

state **Maryland** county **Cecil**

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name **York Building Products**

street & number **1020 N. Hartley Street** telephone no.:

city, town **York** state and zip code **PA 17405**

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. **Cecil County Courthouse** liber **NDS65**

street & number **Main Street** folio **794-98**

city, town **Elkton** state **MD**

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

pository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. CE-1500

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☒ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

8. Significance

Survey No. CH-1500

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. CE-1500May, Earl Chapin. Principio To Wheeling. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945.Robbins, Michael W. The Principio Company. New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1986.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 90 acresQuadrangle name Havre De Grace, MDQuadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

Zone	Easting	Northing							

B

Zone	Easting	Northing							

C

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D

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E

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F

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The Principio Iron Works property is bounded by Principio Creek to the east and south, by Maryland Route 7 to the north, and by Principio Station Road to the west.

This boundary encompasses all the resources associated with the historic iron works.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lee R. Maddex, Project Coordinator Sr.organization Institute for the History of Technology & Industrial Archaeology date 4/30/98street & number 1535 Mileground telephone (304) 293-3829city or town Morgantown state WV 26505

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
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MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
514-7600

Capsule Summary

CE-1500

Principio Iron Works Lower Barn Site

Principio

Private

Circa 1836-37

The Principio Company was established in 1720. Beginning in 1725, intensive ironmaking activity started at the site and continued until the American Revolution. After the war, Samuel Hughes operated a cannon factory on the site, and, in 1836, the property passed to Joseph and George Price Whitaker, who made a series of capital improvements to it. Today the property reflects the Whitaker era of ownership.

This post and beam bank barn has a cruciform plan. The Principio lower barn was the focal point of the Principio farm and ironworks and was used both to store farm machinery and to shelter livestock from the weather. The building burned around 1970. Now only stone foundations remain.

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization:

Eastern Shore

Chronological/Development Period (s):

Agricultural-Industrial Transition: 1781-1835

Industrial-Urban Dominance: 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme (s):

Agriculture

Resource Type:

Category: Site

Historic Environment: Village

Historic Functions (s) and Use (s):

Barn

Known Design Source:

CE-1500

Principio Iron Works-Lower Barn Site

Cecil County

Section 7.1

The Principio Company was established in 1720. Beginning 1725, intensive ironmaking activity started at the site and continued until the American Revolution. After the war, Samuel Hughes operated a cannon factory on the site, and, in 1836, the property passed to Joseph and George Price Whitaker, who made a series of capital improvements to it. Today, the property reflects the Whitaker era of ownership. The property consists of the Second Empire-style company office building, two 1920s corn cribs, foundational remains of a circa 1836 barn, a circa 1850 tool house, a 1890s wagon barn, standing remains of a 1890s blacksmith/wheelwrights shop, a 1890 charcoal kiln, a circa 1890 wash house, foundational remains of a scale house, foundational remains of two charcoal barns, 1837 charcoal iron blast furnace with hot blast stove and waterpowered blowing engine, partial remains of a 1890 hoist house, a 1890 blower engine house, and a circa 1850 shanty.

Resource Count: one (1)

The lower barn was probably built circa 1836-37. It was a post and beam bank barn built on a cruciform plan. The Principio lower barn was the focal point of the Principio farm and ironworks and was used to store farm machinery and/or keep livestock out of the weather. It burned in 1970-71 and extensive mortared stone foundations remain.

CE-1500

Principio Iron Works-Lower Barn Site
Cecil County

Section 8.1

The lower barn site is significant under Criterion A for the area of agriculture. Agriculture was always an important aspect of life at the Principio Iron Works from the colonial era into the twentieth century and barns were an integral part of a working farmstead.

Established in 1720, the Principio Company constructed the Principio Iron Works, the first blast furnace and refinery forge in the Maryland Colony. Located at the head of the Chesapeake Bay, the ironworks plantation consisted of the 1725 Principio Furnace, the 1728 Principio Forge, a store, and dwellings. The Principio Iron Works operated until the time of the American Revolution when they were abandoned. The property was confiscated by the state of Maryland in 1781, and it passed to Colonel Samuel Hughes in 1785. Hughes rebuilt the furnace and added a foundry for the production of cannon. After these works were destroyed by British raiders during the War of 1812, Hughes rebuilt the ironworks, but it bankrupted him and the property passed to his creditors in 1817. The property remained virtually idle for the next two decades when it was first acquired by David Stewart and others in 1834, who in turn sold it Joseph Whitaker II and his brother George Price Whitaker in 1836. The Whitaker brothers completely renovated the aged ironworks, erecting a new blast furnace plant, new worker housing, and the lower barn. Importantly, the site was crossed by the recently completed Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad which created a nexus enabling the ironwork's products to reach larger national markets. Following the Civil War, George Price Whitaker embarked on a second program of capital improvements which included the construction of a new dam, hot blast stove, blowing engine, and waterpowered turbine. Expanding the scope of production at the site, Whitaker, in 1883-84, erected a steampowered forge for the manufacture of wrought iron blooms. The 1837 furnace could not produce enough iron to keep his forge operating continuously and Whitaker commenced a third period of capital improvements to remedy this shortfall. Completed in August 1890, Whitaker erected a cupola-style blast furnace with hot blast stoves, blower engine house, boiler house, hoist house, and a cast house, but these improvements were abandoned shortly after his death in December 1890. Control of the property then passed to Whitaker's nephew Nelson E. Whitaker, who chose to close down the furnaces and produce wrought iron blooms only. Bloom production became closely allied with the Tyler Tube and Pipe Company of Washington, Pennsylvania, owned by William P. Tyler, Nelson E. Whitaker's son-in-law. The forge continued to operate until 1925 when production ceased. The storied Principio property reverted to agricultural use.

← TO PENNYVILLE

CE-1500

MD RT 7

(POST ROAD)

CE-1499



CE-1500



CE-1501

CE-112A



CE-1502

CE-1503



CE-1506

CE-1504

CE-1505

CE-1507



CE-1508



CE-1509

CE-1510

CE-1511



CE-1512

PRINCIPIO CREEK



NO SCALE

Principio Inland Wetlands

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP

MAY 1998

Principio Farmstead, Cecil County, Maryland



CE-1500

LOWER BARN SITE

PRINCIPLO IRON WORKS

CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

LEE R. MADDEX

MARCH 1998

MARYLAND SHPO

FOUNDATIONAL REMAINS OF BARN; LOOKING WEST

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